

to make war on a distant enemy, he and the older men of the tribe would pray daily for victory to the spirits of the dead kings, his predecessors. The day before the army was to set forth, the great war-drum boomed out and the warriors flocked together from the outlying districts under their respective captains. In the dusk of the evening the king and the elderly women, who passed for the wives of the dead kings and tended their shrines at the capital, went and prayed at these shrines that the souls of the departed monarchs would keep the war-path free from foes and lead the king in a straight course to the enemy's stockade. These solemn prayers the king led in person, and the women beat their bare breasts as they joined in the earnest appeal. Next morning the whole army was marshalled in front of the ghost-huts of the dead kings: the living king danced a war-dance before his ancestors, while his chief wife sprinkled him with holy flour; and all prostrated themselves in supplication before the shrines.<sup>1</sup> Among these tribes of Northern Rhodesia the spirits of these tribes of chiefs or kings sometimes take possession of the bodies of live men or women and prophesy through their mouths. When the spirit of a dead chief comes over a man, he begins to roar like a lion, whereupon the women take her together and beat the drums, shouting that the chief has come to visit the village. The man thus temporarily inspired will prophesy of future wars or impending attacks by lions. While the inspiration lasts, he may eat nothing

incarnate cooked by fire, but only  
unfermented dough. However,  
in animals, the spirit of a departed chief  
takes possession of women  
oftener than of men. " These women  
assert that they are  
possessed by the soul of some dead chief,  
and when they  
feel the divine afflatus, whiten their faces to  
attract atten-  
tion, and anoint themselves with flour, which  
has a religious  
and sanctifying potency. One of their  
number beats a  
drum, and the others dance, singing  
at the same time  
a weird song, with curious intervals.  
Finally, when they  
have arrived at the requisite pitch of  
religious exaltation,  
the possessed woman falls to the ground, and  
bursts forth

<sup>1</sup> J. H. West Sheane, "Wemba Society, No. xli.  
(October, 1911) pp.  
Warpaths," *Journal of the African* 25 sq.